

POST-EVENT SUMMARY REPORT

Name of Event : West Kentucky Independent Aging Forum

Date of Event: June 10, 2005

Location of Event: Lone Oak United Methodist Church, Paducah, KY 42001

Number of Persons Attending: 60

Sponsoring Organization(s): AARP, South Eastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Kentucky Association for Gerontology and Purchase Area Development District Area Agency on Aging

Contact Name: Teresa Pierceall

Telephone Number: 270-247-9426

Email: teresa.pierceall@purchaseadd.org

PLANNING ALONG THE LIFESPAN

Priority Issue # 1:

Lack of income resources for seniors is a major problem. For many people, retirement options such as Social Security do not adequately cover the cost of living expenses. Many seniors are not prepared to live on the decreased income of their retirement years.

Barriers:

The lack of pre-planning on the part of older people is a definite problem. Many people have not saved, invested or otherwise prepared for their retirement years. Also, the income eligibility requirements for many programs and services increase as income increases, penalizing the recipient for getting a raise. There is very little public education on the topic of retirement planning or enough incentives for saving and investing in the future. There is little or no government assistance for some necessary items such as medications, hearing aides, eye glasses, dental care, transportation, in-home services, etc. which requires out-of-pocket expenditures.

Purchase Area Development District Area Aging on Aging
Teresa Pierceall
270-247-9426

Proposed Solutions:

More retirement planning assistance could be made available for young and middle-aged adults. This could start as early as high-school in the public education system. More incentives could be made available for saving and investing. More government funded services for low-income seniors could be provided. Social Security reform should continue to be explored, giving more choices to those who favor change but leaving it as it is for those who don't want to take a risk.

OUR COMMUNITY**Priority Issue # 2:**

The lack of government funded non-institutional services for seniors is a major concern. The need for these services covers caregiving issues, senior center programs, transportation and in-home services designed to delay institutionalization. Many seniors, especially those on the lower-income scale, often have to do without basic needs to pay for transportation to the doctor. The frail elderly may go weeks without a bath, living in an unclean environment.

Barriers:

Private pay services are cost prohibitive and, therefore, not an option for many. Many rural elderly do not have access to services even if they could pay for them. Eligibility requirements are sometimes too restrictive.

Proposed Solutions:

More money should be appropriated for services to seniors. A single point of entry for all services for seniors would be more cost effective and should be investigated. The merits of a voucher system could be explored where a recipient could choose service providers and direct their own care. Government incentives could be given to private entities for providing services for the elderly.

Purchase Area Development District Area Agency on Aging
Teresa Pierceall
270-247-9426

HEALTH AND LONG TERM LIVING

Priority Issue # 3:

The high cost of prescription medication continues to be a main concern for elderly people.

Barriers:

- New drugs are being pushed by drug companies when an older drug might work just as well
- Ad campaigns encourage seniors to ask for drugs they may not need
- Misuse and abuse
- Pharmaceutical control – lack of regulations
- Pill splitting (Medicaid may not pay for the lowest dosage)
- Doctor preference for certain drugs

Proposed Solutions:

- Generics should be allowed whenever possible
- Shorten limit of drug patents
- Government set price controls
- Promote mail order
- Set up safeguards against multiple providers
- Promote brown bag clinics
- Offer partial fills on new prescriptions

Purchase Area Development District Area Agencies on Aging
Teresa Pierceall
270-247-9426

